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BUSINESS SIDE OF THE VATICAN

In its October number The Bookkeeper, the Business Man's Magazine gives leading place to an interesting and informing article on "The Business Department of the Vatican." The writer, Mr. George Barton, has evidently been at pains to gather his data from authoritative sources, and his general treatment of the subject is such as will not only arouse and hold the interest of the "men of figures" who read The Bookkeeper, but of the reading public in general. Says the writer:

The business department of the Vatican—by which term is comprehended the immense yet delicate internal machinery of the Roman Catholic church—is probably the least known and yet the most interesting bit of mechanism connected with that notable organization, than which Lord Macaulay declared, none was more worthy of serious examination.

The restlessness and the perfection of the system appeal strongly to the modern American mind, which looks with admiration upon big enterprises of any character and has special reverence for any device by which the ordinary omissions and blunders of mankind are reduced to a minimum. It can be said without exaggeration that the business department of the Vatican is more nearly flawless than that of any great corporation in the world. This perfection, it should be said, is largely obtained by a sacrifice of the speed—the strenuous activity—which is one of the chief features of our modern American business life.

By the Vatican is meant not only the official residence of the pope, which is also the working headquarters of some of his chief assistants, but all of that large establishment in Rome which has the executive charge and management of the material interests of the Roman Catholic church. The Vatican palace is only one of the five large buildings utilized for transacting the business of the holy see. They are the Palazzo di S. Agazio, wherein are the offices of the congregation of the holy office; the Vatican, which is the headquarters of the state department; the Palazzo di Propaganda Fide, occupied by the congregation having charge of the affairs of missionary countries; La Dataria, used by the congregation which might be termed the bureau of appointments; and La Cancelleria, wherein are housed all of the remaining congregations. The buildings are not grouped, but are in widely separated portions of the Eternal City, much as the White House, the treasury department, the pension office and the war and navy departments are scattered in Washington.

An inquiry into the business department of the Vatican naturally includes some reference to the source of revenue of the church, the method of collecting Peter's Pence, the cost of maintaining the Vatican and the mode of disbursing the funds, which are under the control of the Curia Romana. It may be said to include all of those who form the court of the pope, from the cardinal secretary of state down to the humblest subordinate clerk who spends his days and nights on a high stool copying documents and engraving certified copies of papal bulls.

During the period that the pope was sovereign of the Roman states the government was administered—under the pontiff—by a minister of the interior, the ministers of finance, commerce and war, a council of state, several boards and commissions, a financial counselor and courts of law for trying civil and criminal cases. Since the pope has been deprived of his temporal power these offices remain in abeyance.

The receipts and expenditures of the Vatican, like those of our government at Washington, vary from year to year, so that it is impossible to give precise figures. It is estimated, however, upon good authority, that during the last years of the life of Leo XIII the annual receipts and expenditures amounted to about \$1,500,000. One estimate of the division of this sum places \$100,000 for the support of cardinals and diplomatic missions abroad, \$800,000 for the maintenance of the Vatican and its libraries and museums—which, of course, includes the Vatican household expenses; \$400,000 for the pontifical aids and the subsidies to the schools of Rome; \$200,000 to gifts and charities, and \$200,000 for miscellaneous purposes. In some instances the cost of diplomatic missions is defrayed by the countries to which they are delegated; in others by the pope.

The revenues of the church come from two sources, one known as the "patrimony of Peter" and the other called "Peter's pence." The patrimony of Peter represents the invested capital of the church. It is the interest on funds invested by former pontiffs, rent from buildings owned by the church, fees for various services performed and documents that are issued in the course of everyday ecclesiastical business. Since the bulk of its property was seized by the Italian government, the church realizes very little from its real holdings in the Eternal City. Cardinal Mennini, who is known as the administrator of the Vatican, is also the disburser of its funds and is regarded as a man of unusual ability as a financier. Some of the money of the Vatican is in Italian banks, but this money represents the less important parts of the whole, or what in bank parlance is known as the "float account of the Vatican." The failure of an Italian bank, some ten years ago, by which the Vatican lost a considerable sum of money, has made the officials very wary about having business relations with the financial institutions of Rome. It is no secret that the larger portion of the Vatican investments are in London securities. Of recent years Berlin, as well, has been given friendly consideration. It is hardly necessary to say that the investments are exclusively in high-class bonds.

Peter's pence is probably more important than the fixed revenues of the Vatican, for it represents the voluntary and often spontaneous offerings of the faithful. The time and method of its collection are left entirely to the judgment of the bishop of each particular diocese. Of course, under such a condition the method of collecting Peter's pence varies very materially. In this country the process is quite simple. The plan adopted by any one of the large dioceses is representative of that employed in the others. Take Philadelphia as a specimen.

The archbishop sends out a letter to the rector of every parish in his archdiocese, instructing him to take up a collection for the Pope at all of the services on a specified Sunday. The letter contains an appeal calling upon the faithful to contribute "according to their means." One of the reminders, relating to a collection taken up a few years ago, recited the fact that, since the Italian government has despoiled the Pope of his temporal possessions, he depended almost entirely upon the voluntary contributions of the people. It paid an eloquent and merited tribute to the character and work of Leo XIII, and was read at all of the masses in the churches. In most cases it was accompanied by an exhortation from the pastor and his assistants urging the faithful to make an untiring effort in order to show their devotion to the Holy See. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has a Catholic population of nearly 500,000. Deduct the number of those below the age at which attendance at mass is compulsory, and it will readily be seen what an extensive publicity is given to the appeal. In addition to this verbal advertisement, direct as it is, the archbishop prints the appeal in the official organ of the archdiocese. The

announcements having been made on one Sunday, the collection is taken up on the following Sunday. The money is forwarded to the chancellor of the archdiocese, who, in his turn, remits it to the Vatican.

When it is known that the plan is applied to every diocese and every parish in the United States, it is not difficult to imagine that the results are exceedingly fruitful. Indeed, it may be said that the collection of Peter's Pence is the most thorough, the most systematic and the most economically managed revenue producing agency, combining both business and religion, that has ever been attempted in this country. The method of collection demonstrates the power of perfect organization. From top to bottom, every bit of the vast mechanism works with absolute precision. There is order and authority everywhere. The spectacle is presented of one cardinal, thirteen archbishops, eighty-seven bishops, 12,968 priests and 11,280,710 of the laity working in entire harmony to accomplish a given purpose. Consider that these figures relate merely to the United States, which is only one nation out of many, and the magnitude of the operation becomes apparent.

Some parts of the distribution of the Papal income are regulated by rule, but the Pope is the unquestioned dispenser of the Peter's Pence. In the early age of the Church in England, this was regarded as a fixed tax, but now, while considered a pious duty, it is purely a voluntary contribution. The Pope, besides allotting hundreds of thousands of dollars for the running expenses of the Vatican, for maintaining schools and libraries, for supporting cardinals and diplomats and for gifts and charities, maintains also the Pontifical army. It is composed of four sections—the Noble Guard, the Swiss Guard, the Guard Palatine and the gendarmes. The only commands receiving pay are the Swiss Guard and the gendarmes who live in the Vatican. The other guards are made up of the sons of wealthy families. They reside outside the walls and support themselves. The Swiss Guards receive \$10 a month, out of which they must pay for one meal. The fact that every member of the Noble Guard is a count, a marquis or a titled nobleman of some rank makes it the most unique, the most exclusive and the most aristocratic body of soldiers in the world.

The Pope has no personal salary. There is a reason: Being a spiritual sovereign, he cannot be a subject of or subject to any person on earth. This one thought contains, in a nutshell, the whole theory and contention of the Church as to the temporal power of the Pope. He not only protests against the confiscation of Church property, but he declines to be an Italian subject, and is thus a self-imposed prisoner in the Vatican. The Popes have followed Pius IX in steadfastly declining to receive the money voted for the maintenance of the Holy See by the Italian government. It is a grant of about 3,000,000 francs a year, and, as it has been refused for thirty-three years, the total is now about \$20,000,000 with interest. No tax is imposed on the Church for the support of the Pope. In this the Pope differs from every other minister of the Church. Rectors and curates receive specified salaries. The bishops and supported by the pastors. Every parish sets aside a pro rata sum, known as "Cathedralium," for the bishop. Cardinals are paid a salary of \$5,000 per annum, exactly the amount paid by our government to each member of the United States senate. Nuncios, legates and delegates are paid prescribed salaries.

Pomp and power and responsibility surround the Pope. He has control over immense sums of money. But out of it all he gains no temporal or personal advantages. He receives simply food and lodging. And it is no exaggeration to say that his living expenses are as low, if not lower, than those of the humblest curate in any one of our large city parishes. One authority has placed the amount at four francs a day.

The Papal delegate to the United States receives a salary of \$6,000 per annum, out of which he pays an auditor and a secretary. Fortunately, some years ago, he was presented with an official residence in the city of Washington, so that he is relieved from the payment of house rent. His expenses for travel, in going from city to city, are paid by the Propaganda. The United States is not a diplomatic mission. The delegate resides here as the personal representative of the Holy Father for the purpose of settling ecclesiastical or other disputes between bishops and priests, and priests and people. Nuncios are appointed by the Pope to nations having regular diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The principal missions are at Paris, Madrid, Lisbon and Vienna, the capitals of what are popularly known as Catholic countries.

The congregations or committees are the mediums through which the greater part of the business of the Holy See is transacted. The general plan of doing business at the Vatican may be best explained by saying that the Pope is the great centre towards which all of the congregations converge. Everything of importance they pass upon comes to him for final confirmation. A mass of mail matter is received at the Vatican every morning—it has been estimated at 23,000 pieces—and it is distributed with promptness and exactness. That which is addressed directly to the separate congregations, of course, goes to them at first hand. The multitude of letters addressed to the Pope are opened by his secretaries, and the communications that do not require the personal attention of His Holiness are referred to the appropriate congregations. Four secretaries, with their assistants, have all they can attend to in opening, sorting and distributing the daily mail.

To be an employee of any of the congregations requires a high degree of intelligence. Accuracy is required above all else, and carelessness in transcribing important decisions, relating to faith and morals, can easily assume the importance of a venial sin. Salaries of the officials are small, in some cases not over \$200 per year. To this is added the cost of maintenance. Incidentally, it might be stated that the Vatican itself is a parish, quite distinct from St. Peter's. The Vatican parish includes all who live in that vast and beautiful edifice. The men who reside and are employed there are thought that there are only two ways to do a task—the right way and the wrong way. The man who does it the wrong way more than once is soon informed that his usefulness has been impaired and that it would be well to seek employment elsewhere. But the forms are so precise that it seems difficult to go wrong. An employee is commanded to do a certain thing in a certain way, and apparently nothing but perversity can get him in the erroneous way. Rules are indelible. It is like pouring hot metals into carefully prepared molds. The mass of matter is bound to come out in certain cast-iron patterns.

This sketch of the business methods of the Vatican would not be complete without calling attention to the fact that the Church possesses two complete printing establishments in Rome. They are very similar in their make-up to the Government printing office at Washington. One is in the Vatican palace, and the other, in the Propaganda, known as the Polygot, is perhaps the most remarkable printing house in the world. It contains complete sets of type, cast in nearly all of the known languages. The most important of the fonts used in the "art preservative" are the Latin, Greek,

English, Italian, French and German. Missals for different rites are printed in all languages, and books of piety and devotion are turned out by the tens of thousands. Cases have been known where a missionary, at the head of a band of priests who have successfully Christianized some heathen country, has set himself to the task of compiling a catechism and prayer book in the language of the natives of the country and has then gone to Rome and had the printing done at the Polygot office.

The fact that a large portion of the work done in the business department of the Vatican is made a matter of conscience may in a large measure account for the perfection of the system and the economy of the administration. The officials who preside over the various congregations are not only men of great learning, but also, in many instances men of affairs who have represented the Holy See at many of the courts of Europe. While the temporal power obtained, archbishops and other prelates were governors of provinces. Since then they have found opportunities in other fields of acquiring knowledge of modern business methods, a knowledge which has been skilfully utilized in the management of the vast concern known to us by those two brief words—the Vatican.

Late Irish News

(Dublin Freeman, Nov. 14.)

Mr. Charles Dawson writes suggesting a national exhibition in Dublin.

Pembroke council has decided to extend its system of electric lighting.

On Monday at a special meeting of the corporation a report recommending improvements in the Ormond Market area was adopted.

The Lord Chancellor has been pleased to appoint Mr. James Lawlor, solicitor, of 23 Upper O'Connell street, Dublin, a commissioner to administer oaths for the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland.

An inquest was held on Monday at St. Michael's hospital, Kingstown, on the remains of Henry Smullen, who was drowned in Kingstown harbor on Sunday morning. Dr. Murray certified that death was due to drowning. Verdict accordingly.

At Wednesday's meeting of the North Dublin Rural District council representations were received for the erection of twenty-seven laborers' cottages in the electoral divisions of Blanchardstown, Castleknock and Coolock. A resolution was passed acknowledging the necessity for a scheme and postponing the making of one for three weeks.

Mr. Meymott, the principal comedian in "The Belle of New York" company, which is performing at the Theatre Royal this week, met with a severe accident on Tuesday in his rooms in Merion row. It appears that the drapery on a chair which was close to the fire caught alight, and when Mr. Meymott entered his sitting room he found the chair and drapery burning fiercely, and so to avert a serious fire instant steps had to be taken, and he rushed forward and threw a rug on the chair. He eventually managed to extinguish it, and so prevented what might have been a very serious fire. Unfortunately, Mr. Meymott received very serious burns on his right hand and arm which necessitated immediate medical treatment. Although suffering considerable pain, Mr. Meymott appeared in his part that night at the Theatre Royal. He had to wear his arm in a sling.

ALL AROUND IRELAND.

It is announced that Mr. Balfour will shortly visit Ireland.

A Galway trawler was destroyed by fire on Sunday night.

Resolutions come from various quarters deploring William O'Brien's resignation, and asking him to reconsider his decision.

The Dublin Fusiliers arrived at Queenstown on Monday, after many years' absence on foreign service.

At the meeting of the Waterford No. 1 district council a letter was read to the effect that the lord lieutenant has intimated his intention of reappointing the commission into the proposed free bridge.

At a meeting of the Derry magistrates on Thursday it was decided to draft extra police into the city in connection with the strike on the Lough Swilly railway.

Granard Board of Guardians on Monday discussed the dismissal of the master and the appointment of his successor, and refused to hand over the stock to the new master.

Colonel Sanderson, M. P., speaking at Portladow on Thursday, said if they could prevent it they would—that they objected to the British taxpayer paying his money to establish a priest's university in Ireland. If the government proposed such a bill they would leave the party.

Attempted outrages are reported on the Londonderry & Lough Swilly railway, on which a strike exists. On Monday it was found that Sunday night's train from Carnadoagh had passed over a heavy piece of timber, cutting it in three. No arrests have been made.

E. J. McCormack, Thurles, who for thirteen years was a valued member of the Thurles Urban council, died on Wednesday. Mr. McCormack was proprietor of an extensive and fashionable millinery establishment in the town of Thurles, where he was universally liked.

John Loughran, 23 years of age, on Tuesday shot his father and mother, who were asleep in bed at Ballycastle, Belfast, and then turned the pistol on himself, inflicting a fatal wound. Though seriously injured, they are progressing favorably. At the inquest on John Loughran a verdict of suicide during temporary insanity was returned.

The friends, especially in Baryboro', where he lived for a number of years, of the Rev. J. Harris, Adm. of Carlow, will be sorry to learn that he is suffering from blood poisoning and is seriously ill.

The election of a member of parliament for West Belfast took place recently. The Tory candidate won, receiving 3,012 votes, while Patrick Dempsey, Nationalist, polled 3,671 votes.

In the Carmelite Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Delany, recently, the third daughter of the late Edward Derry of Landscape, Waterford, whose name in religion is Sister Mary of the Incarnation, received the white veil.

A meeting of the tenants on the estate of Miss Jane Kirk was held at Crossedown, near Keady, on Nov. 3, and it was unanimously resolved to send a deputation to the agent with a proposition to buy their holdings.

Mrs. Margaret Brennan, mother of Rev. James Brennan, curate of Silverue, and sister of the late Rev. Daniel Brennan, pastor of Kilmacow, died on Oct. 30 at the residence of the first named priest.



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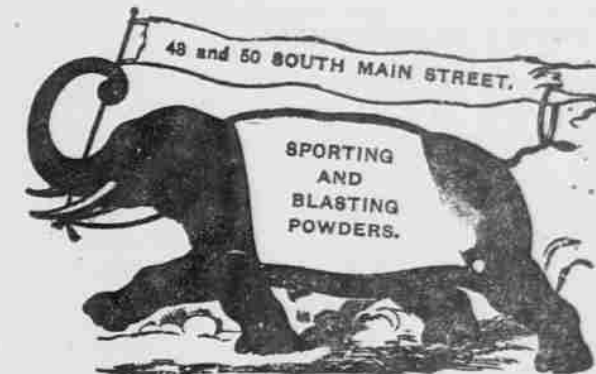
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